

OFFSHORE CALL CENTERS IMPROVING CUSTOMER SERVICE, CUTTING COSTS

The Service Opportunity

Quality customer service is an important competitive differentiator. It's more efficient to keep existing customers than to get new ones. And one of the best ways to keep customers is to offer responsive service and support.

Because they're typically viewed as a cost center, however, most companies have to be careful about how much they spend on customer service operations. Staffing is a particularly thorny issue. Everyone wants to have enough staff to ensure short wait-times – but that kind of payroll can potentially be a major profit-buster.

One solution is the off-shore call center. By moving call centers overseas, companies can significantly reduce the labor and facilities costs associated with maintaining high staffing levels. In some industries, such as manufacturing and importing, an off-shore call center can offer the added advantage of placing customer service representatives closer to a company's production and/or technical expertise. This can further enhance the quality of customer services while reducing monthly expenses.

The problem, of course, is that additional telecom costs may more than offset the gains that can be realized from the use of an off-shore call center. Fortunately, these costs can be slashed through the use of voice-over-IP (VoIP). With VoIP, voice traffic can be routed from an overseas call center to a company's points-of-presence anywhere else in the world at relatively low cost. VoIP can therefore enable companies to gain all the benefits of an off-shore call center while shielding them from the prohibitive international long-distance charges they would otherwise incur.

The Technical Challenge

While the benefits of a low-cost off-shore call-center consolidation are extremely attractive, many companies may hesitate to rely on VoIP for their critical communications with customers because of three primary concerns:

Concerns about the reliability and quality of voice service over the IP network

No one wants phone calls to and from their customers to be anything less than 100% reliable. So any VoIP solution that might potentially jeopardize those calls will not be acceptable for a call center deployment.

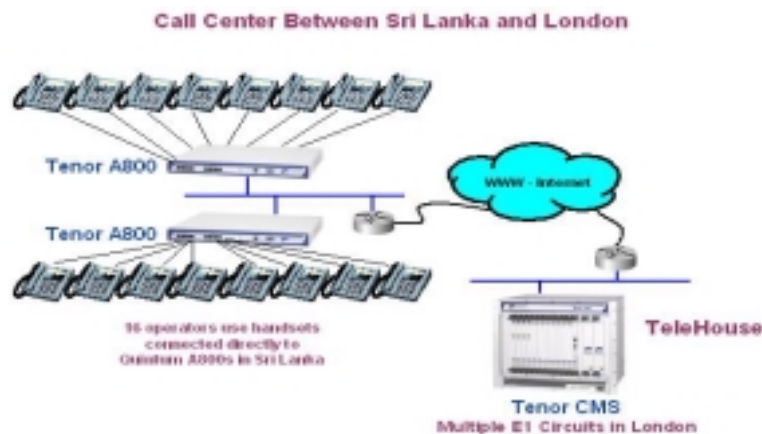
Concerns about technical implementation and management skills

Most IT departments do not possess extensive VoIP technology expertise. With their staff resources already strained to the limit, they may be hesitant about taking on a new technology that is outside of their current core competency.

Concerns about infrastructure disruption

Companies have made significant investments in both their PBX/voice and router/data infrastructure. They do not want to have to overhaul that infrastructure to gain the benefits of VoIP.

To be practical, VoIP solutions must therefore ensure voice quality, offer simplicity of installation and management, and be non-disruptive to existing voice and data infrastructure.



VoIP technology can enable companies to locate their call centers overseas – dramatically reducing staff and facilities cost

Quintum Technologies' Tenor Solution: Risk-Free, Non-Disruptive VoIP

Quintum Technologies' patented Tenor switching solution is ideal for supporting off-shore call centers. Attributes of the Tenor solution that are particularly relevant to the provisioning of overseas customer service operations include:

Guaranteed call quality

Tenor switches vigilantly protect voice-call quality by continually monitoring conditions on the IP network and taking immediate action if those conditions threaten voice traffic in any way. If conditions such as delay or "jitter" become evident, Quintum's SelectNet™ technology automatically and transparently switches any active calls from the IP network to the PSTN. This can be done in mid-call without interrupting either party. Once conditions on the IP network are restored, VoIP can then be re-activated. The savings associated with VoIP are thus momentarily sacrificed to ensure the non-stop quality of customer calls.

Non-disruptive implementation

The Tenor's unique MultiPath architecture allows it to be easily installed in line with existing PBX trunks to the PSTN. This requires little or no reconfiguration of the PBX and eliminates any need to add costly PBX tie trunks. The Tenor's integrated call routing functions identify which calls are to be routed over the IP network. Calls that do not qualify for IP routing simply pass through to the PSTN. The Tenor is thus transparent to the PBX and totally non-disruptive to existing voice and data infrastructure.

Intelligent "hop-off" and "hop-on" routing

The Tenor's intelligent, easy-to-administer "hop-off" functionality allows long distance calls outside the bank's network to be first carried to the appropriate local office via the corporate IP network. This provides the added benefit of eliminating international long-distance charges for all calls made to and from countries where a company maintains an office. Tenors can even be configured to provide this "free" international calling to remote and/or mobile users, as well as employees inside corporate offices.

Conclusion

To reduce costs and improve the quality of customer service, companies can locate their call center facilities in overseas locations where labor and facilities are significantly less expensive – avoiding the telecom costs that would otherwise be associated with such initiatives through the use of VoIP. Quintum Technologies' Tenor VoIP MultiPath Switch ensures that such initiatives can be implemented without putting critical customer communications at risk. Quintum's Tenor solution also makes implementation and ongoing management extremely simple for corporate technical staffs, further maximizing ROI and accelerating time-to-benefit.

About Quintum Technologies

Eatontown N.J.-based Quintum Technologies specializes in voice-over-IP technologies that bring the reliability and voice clarity of public telephone networks to Internet telephony. Its Tenor VoIP MultiPath Switches help businesses of all sizes migrate to converged networking without risk. Quintum sells its MultiPath switches worldwide through a network of resellers and distributors. For more information call 877-SPEAK IP (1-877-773-2547), 732-460-9000 outside the U.S., or visit www.quintum.com.

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